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Ministry of Forests and Range

SKEETCHESTN INDIAN BAND HELPS HARVEST BEETLE WOOD

VICTORIA – More than 102,000 cubic metres of mountain pine beetle wood will be salvaged through a forestry agreement reached with the Skeetchestn Indian Band, Forests and Range Minister Rich Coleman announced today.

"First Nations are important partners in ensuring we recover optimum value from beetle-attacked timber in the Interior," said Coleman. "At the same time, this opportunity will help the Skeetchestn play a greater role in B.C.'s forest sector."

Under the three-year agreement, the band will gain access to 102,351 cubic metres of beetle wood in the Kamloops Timber Supply Area. The volume augments a forest and range opportunities agreement reached with the band in July, which provided $1.2 million in shared revenue and 125,315 cubic metres of timber.

"Our goal is to use these short-term forestry opportunities to create long-term economic stability for our people," said Chief Eddy Jules. "We want to be prepared for life after the mountain pine beetle infestation."

The Skeetchestn community is located near Savona, east of Cache Creek.

"This agreement is a concrete expression of our New Relationship with First Nations – a relationship based on recognition, reconciliation and respect," said Kamloops MLA Claude Richmond. "It will also help the Skeetchestn people broaden their economic foundation, and create new jobs for band members."

Since 2002, the Province has reached agreements with 117 First Nations, sharing more than $153.2 million in revenue and access to 22.9 million cubic metres of timber.

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Media contact:
Jennifer McLarty
Public Affairs Officer
Ministry of Forests and Range
250 387-4592

Eddy Jules
Chief
Skeetchestn Indian Band
250 373-2493

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